

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA IMMEDIATE

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TAGS:PARM

SUBJECT:ARTICLE ON SALT:US-SOV ARMS TALKS ARE DEADLOCKED

1. FOR YOUR INFO, APRIL 11 N.Y. TIMES CARRIES ARTICLE BY
BERNARD GWERTZMAN, TEXT FOLLOWS:

2. BEGIN TEXT. EFFORTS TO CONCLUDE A NEW SOVIET-AMERICAN
AGREEMENT CURBING STRATEGIC ARMS HAVE AGAIN BECOME DEAD-
LOCKED, AND TOP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAY THEY ARE NOT
OPTIMISTIC THAT THE ACCORD CAN BE ACHIEVED BEFORE THE
NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

FOLLOWING SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY A. KISSINGER'S LAST VISIT
TO MOSCOW IN JANUARY, ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS WERE LARGELY
ENCOURAGED BY THE POSSIBILITY OF CONCLUDING THE NEGOTIA-
TIONS BY THIS SPRING.

BUT SEVERAL RANKING OFFICIALS SAID IN RECENT DAYS THAT THE
BITTER ELECTION CAMPAIGN, IN WHICH PRESIDENT FORD HAS BEEN
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FORCED ON THE DEFENSIVE BY ATTACKS ON HIS DETENTE AND

DEFENSE POLICIES, PERSUADED THE WHITE HOUSE NOT TO PUSH AHEAD WITH THE KIND OF NEGOTIATING APPROACH THAT MIGHT HAVE FACILITATED AN ACCORD.

REASSESSMENT BY SOVIET

IN ADDITION, THE SOVIET UNION, APPARENTLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING ANTI-SOVIET PRONOUNCEMENTS IN THIS COUNTRY, HAS GIVEN SIGNS OF REASSESSING ITS OWN RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

AS A RESULT, THE EXCHANGE OF FORMAL PROPOSALS MADE BY THE UNITED STATES AND SOVIET UNION IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS HAS BEEN FRUITLESS.

"NEITHER SIDE CAME ACROSS WITH A CREATIVE IDEA," ONE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAID. "WE SEEM TO BE BACK AT THE PRE-JANUARY DEADLOCK."

THE OFFICIAL SAID THAT IF NO AGREEMENT IS REACHED THIS YEAR, THE TWO SIDES MAY HAVE TO TRY TO EXTEND THE CURRENT FIVE-YEAR INTERIM ACCORD ON OFFENSIVE STRATEGIC ARMS, WHICH EXPIRES IN OCTOBER 1977, THEREBY FORESTALLING AN EXPANSION IN EITHER SIDE'S LAND-BASED OR SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED MISSILE FORCES THAT WERE FROZEN BY THE 1972 AGREEMENT.

PEACEFUL USES SEPARATE

YESTERDAY, THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION COMPLETED NEGOTIATIONS ON THE TEXT FOR LIMITING THE SIZE OF UNDERGROUND NUCLEAR TESTS FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES, AND THIS ACCORD WILL BE SIGNED SOON.

BUT OFFICIALS SAID THIS WAS A SEPARATE MATTER, WHICH HAS BEEN CAREFULLY ISOLATED FROM ANY OTHER SOVIET-AMERICAN ISSUE. (SIC)

THE DEADLOCK IN THE STRATEGIC ARMS TALKS HAS COME AS A DISAPPOINTMENT TO MR. KISSINGER AND HIS CLOSEST AIDES
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WHO HAVE BEEN STRUGGLING FOR THE LAST 17 MONTHS TO CONCLUDE THE AGREEMENT THAT WAS SKETCHED IN OUTLINE AT VLADIVOSTOK BY MR. FORD AND LEONID I. BREZHNEV, THE SOVIET LEADER.

THE DISAPPOINTMENT HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY THE FACT THAT IN LATE JANUARY, AFTER MR. KISSINGER'S EXTENSIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH MR. BREZHNEV, THOSE FAVORING A STRATEGIC

ARMS CONTROL ACCORD BELIEVED IT WAS CERTAIN TO COME ABOUT.

BUT, ACCORDING TO VARIOUS OFFICIALS, WHEN MR. KISSINGER EXPLAINED TO MR. FORD AND DEFENSE SECRETARY DONALD H.

RUMSFELD WHAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED AND WHAT WAS NECESSARY TO FURTHER THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE PRESIDENT, REPORTEDLY AGREEING WITH MR. RUMSFELD'S ADVICE, DECIDED TO TAKE AS NONCONTROVERSIAL A POSTURE AS POSSIBLE. BUT IT WAS ALSO A POLICY THAT THE RUSSIANS WERE SURE TO REJECT, AND THEY DID.

WHAT HAPPENED WAS THIS, ACCORDING TO OFFICIALS:

BEFORE GOING TO MOSCOW IN JANUARY, MR KISSINGER WAS GIVEN A SERIES OF OPTIONS TO PRESENT TO MR. BREZHNEV FOR OVERCOMING THE REMAINING PROBLEMS.

UNDER THE VLADIVOSTOK AGREEMENT, BOTH SIDES WERE ALLOWED TO HAVE A MAXIMUM OF 2,400 LONG-RANGE MISSILE LAUNCHERS AND BOMBERS. OF THESE, 1,320 LAUNCHERS COULD BE FOR MISSILES WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS THAT CAN STRIKE AT SEVERAL TARGETS.

THE AMERICANS, HOWEVER, BEGAN INSISTING THAT A NEW SOVIET BOMBER, KNOWN IN THE WEST AS THE BACKFIRE, BE INCLUDED IN THE 2,400 TOTAL SINCE UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES - SUCH AS FLYING BELOW THE SPEED OF SOUND-IT COULD HIT THE UNITED STATES. (SIC)

THE CRUISE MISSILE ISSUE

THE RUSSIANS, ON THEIR PART, SAID A NEW AMERICAN WEAPONS UNCLASSIFIED

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SYSTEM, THE CRUISE MISSILE, WHICH FLIES AT LOW ALTITUDES AND AT SLOW SPEEDS BUT IS HIGHLY ACCURATE, BE INCLUDED IN THE TOTALS IF IT HAD A RANGE OF MORE THAN 375 MILES.

MR. KISSINGER SETTLED IN MOSCOW ON A SYSTEM BY WHICH AIR-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES FROM BOMBERS WOULD BE ALLOWED WITH A RANGE OF UP TO 1,500 MILES, BUT EACH BOMBER WOULD BE COUNTED AGAINST THE 1,320 MULTIPLE-WARHEAD TOTAL.

THE AMERICANS ALSO SUGGESTED, AND THE RUSSIANS THEN ELABORATED, A PLAN TO REDUCE THE 2,400 MAXIMUM BY A COUPLE OF HUNDRED. THIS WOULD ALLOW THE RUSSIANS TO HAVE ABOUT 250 BACKFIRE BOMBERS AND THE UNITED STATES TO HAVE ABOUT 25 SURFACE SHIPS WITH 10 LONG-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES EACH WITHOUT COUNTING EITHER BACKFIRE OR CRUISE MISSILE

WITHIN THE OVERALL CEILING.

IN MOSCOW, THE TWO SIDES ALSO AGREED ON DEFINITIONS FOR A "HEAVY" MISSILE TO INSURE THAT THE RUSSIANS DID NOT EXPAND THEIR FORCE OF 309 SUCH LAND-BASED MISSILES.

BUT WHEN MR. KISSINGER BEGAN DISCUSSING THE NEW NEGOTIATING SITUATION IN WASHINGTON, HE FOUND THE PENTAGON WAS RESISTING ANY FURTHER COMPROMISES.

JACKSON REACTION A FACTOR

IN FACT, MR. RUMSFELD STILL INSISTED THAT THE BACKFIRE BE INCLUDED IN THE TOTAL CEILING, OTHERWISE SENATOR HENRY M. JACKSON, A LEADING DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDER, AND RONALD REAGAN, THE REPUBLICAN CONTENDER, WOULD ACCUSE THE ADMINISTRATION OF GIVING THE RUSSIANS AN ADVANTAGE.

LIKEWISE, THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF RESISTED RESTRAINTS ON THE SURFACE-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILE, EVEN THOUGH MR. KISSINGER INSISTS THAT THE NAVY IN THE END WILL NEVER ASK FOR FUNDS TO DEPLOY SUCH A SYSTEM.

IN THE END, ON FEBRUARY 16, MR. KISSINGER GAVE AMBASSADOR ANATOLY F. DOBRYNIN THE COUNTERPROPOSAL HE WAS TO TAKE BACK TO MOSCOW WITH HIM FOR THE 25TH COMMUNIST PARTY
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CONGRESS.

THAT PROPOSAL, SIMILAR TO AN OPTION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION HAD DISCARDED IN JANUARY WHEN MR. KISSINGER WAS IN MOSCOW WAS FOR THE TWO SIDES TO AGREE ON WHAT HAD BEEN ACHIEVED AND PUT ASIDE REMAINING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES. IN EFFECT, BOTH SIDES WOULD BE FREE TO DEVELOP THE DISPUTED WEAPONS SYSTEMS -- THE BACKFIRES AND THE SURFACE-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES.

BUT THE RUSSIANS, APPARENTLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE UNITED STATES EMBARKING ON THE SURFACE-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILES, RESPONDED IN LATE MARCH WITH A MESSAGE FROM MR. BREZHNEV TO MR. FORD REPEATING SOVIET INTEREST IN AN AGREEMENT, BUT REPEATING SOVIET OPPOSITION TO ANY CRUISE MISSILE BEYOND 375 MILES.

LIMIT FOR BALLISTIC MISSILES

IN VLADIVOSTOK, THE TWO SIDES HAD AGREED ON SUCH A LIMIT FOR MISSILES, BUT THE UNITED STATES CONTENTED THAT THIS

REFERRED ONLY TO BALLISTIC MISSILES THAT FLY AT SUPER-SONIC SPEEDS BEYOND THE ATMOSPHERE.

IN EFFECT, THE SOVIET UNION HAD REJECTED THE AMERICAN IDEA AND ASKED WASHINGTON TO COME UP WITH A NEW PROPOSAL. THE VERIFICATION PANEL, THE INTERAGENCY GROUP THAT STUDIES ARMS CONTROL MATTERS, HAS BEEN MEETING AND IS AGAIN STUDYING NEW APPROACHES.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS SAID THE WHITE HOUSE INCLINATION NOW IS TO HOLD OFF ON ANYTHING UNTIL AFTER THE PRIMARIES ARE OVER -- IN JUNE.

BY THEN, THESE OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT ANY NEGOTIATION WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS TOO POLITICAL, AND IT WOULD BE DOUBTFUL THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD BE WILLING TO MAKE ANY CONCESSIONS IF THEY WERE UNCERTAIN WHO WOULD BE ELECTED IN NOVEMBER. END TEXT. KISSINGER

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